



## Conservative Central Office

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### FIRST STATE OF BATTLE SURVEY

#### - GENERAL ELECTION 1983

Harris (ORC) conducted the first of our State of Battle Surveys last weekend. The interviewing was conducted from 13th to 14th May and Harris (ORC) interviewed over 2,000 electors throughout Great Britain. The study found a 14% Conservative lead over Labour and Alliance support falling to 16%.

The first two pages of the Harris (ORC) report provide a very brief summary of the main findings. I would particularly draw your attention to the following points:-

- there is still a considerable potential for an Alliance bandwagon - although at present we have no evidence of a bandwagon starting. 20% of Conservatives and 31% of Labour voters would be more likely to vote for the Alliance if they thought they would get a majority, and almost as many of them thought they would hold the balance of power.
- we are still vulnerable because our policies are thought to have contributed to the high level of unemployment and to have damaged the National Health and education services.
- there is no apparent backlash against the Conservatives for having called the election - an overwhelming majority of voters believe it was the correct decision.

D. K. BRITTO

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HARRIS RESEARCH CENTRE

Summary of Findings of the  
First State of the Battle Survey

Fieldwork: 13/14 May 1983

Sample: A nationally representative  
Quota Sample of 2092 Electors

STATE OF BATTLE SURVEY 1. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

1. The Conservative lead has increased from 10% on 6th/7th May to 14% on 13th/14th May. The Labour vote has remained static at 34% while the Alliance has dropped from 20% to 16%.
2. There is however still Alliance potential if they could get a bandwagon rolling. 20% of Conservatives and 31% of Labour voters would be more likely to vote for the Alliance if they thought they would get a majority, and almost as many if they thought they would hold the balance of power.
3. The proposition that the Alliance policies are very similar to those of Labour is not credible to almost half of all voters and under a third accept it.

This argument would need a lot of exposure to make it acceptable and this may not succeed in the time available.

By giving a lot of exposure to the term "alliance policies" which many electors believe are too vague and non-existent may have the effect of adding to the credibility of the Alliance and contributing to the 'bandwagon effect' which is potentially dangerous.

4. The Conservatives are still vulnerable (though slightly less so than last week) because through their policies, they are thought to have contributed to the high level of unemployment, and to have damaged the National Health and Education services.

There are some indications that to talk of the Conservatives being effective in dealing with the problem of unemployment may be preferable to talking of Conservatives having the right policies to deal with unemployment.

(NOTE: the Weekend World Poll in the Marginal Constituencies indicated that the Conservatives' apparent lack of concern about unemployment was the largest single obstacle to more voters supporting the Party.)

5. Conservatives are widely thought to be the best Party to deal with RISING PRICES, LAW AND ORDER, CONTROL OF TRADE UNIONS, DEALING WITH THE COMMON MARKET AND DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.
6. Labour is particularly vulnerable on its defence policies and the extent to which its left wing posture is thought likely to 'damage our traditional way of life in Britain!.
7. There is no apparent backlash against the Conservatives for having called the Election, - an overwhelming majority of voters believe it was the correct decision.
8. Although there is no great belief that any Party will fulfill its Election promises, the Conservatives are slightly better placed than their opponents in this respect.

## 1, Voting Intention

Between the 6th/7th May and the 13th/14th May the Conservative share of the vote has increased by 4%, from 44% to 48%, the Labour share of the vote has remained static at 34%, while the Alliance share has dropped from 20% to 16%.

	13/14 May	6/7 May
	%	%
Conservative	48	44
Labour	34	34
Alliance	16	20
Other	2	2

Changes within demographic groups are not substantial over the week, but there are one or two changes which are worth noting:

- (a) Conservative standing amongst the 18-24 age group has improved significantly - from 39% last week to 48% this week.
- (b) In the current survey there is a clear majority of Trade Union members intending to vote Labour - 45% compared with 36% intending to vote Conservative and 18% Alliance.
- (c) Labour still command a clear majority of votes in the Northern Region and in the North West, though the Conservative position in Scotland appear to have improved over the week, mainly at the expense of the Alliance and Nationalists

	Trade Unionists		Northern		North Western		Scotland	
	6/7 May	13/14 May	6/7 May	13/14 May	6/7 May	13/14 May	6/7 May	13/14 May
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative	38*	36	30	36	39	40	27	45
Labour	40	45	57	48	42	47	40	35
Alliance	21	18	11	16	18	13	21	13
Other	1	1	2	2	1	-	12	7

(Note\* comparison is with Gallup poll 6/7 May, the other figures for 6/7 May are from the ORC poll)

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6. Labour is particularly vulnerable on its defence policies and the extent to which its left wing posture is thought likely to 'damage our traditional way of life in Britain'.
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8. Although there is no great belief that any Party will fulfill its Election promises, the Conservatives are slightly better placed than their opponents in this respect.

Likelihood of Voting

If there is to be any differential absention on election day this could harm the Alliance rather more than the Conservatives of Labour, both of whose voters are equally likely to turn our.

Q. When there is an election on June 9th how likely is it that you would go to vote?

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	%	%
Absolutely certain	76	73	64
Very likely	11	15	15
Fairly likely	5	5	9
Not very/ not at all likely	7	7	10
Don't know	1	1	2

Likely Outcome of the Election

Belief in a Conservative win on June 9th has increased significantly over the last week. Now substantial majorities of both Labour and Alliance voters think the Conservatives will win.

Q. Leaving on one side your own hopes which Party do you think will win a General Election?

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>All Voters</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	%	%	%
Conservative	79(67)	92(83)	62(49)	79(63)
Labour	10(18)	3(7)	23(34)	6(15)
Alliance	1(3)	* (2)	1(3)	4(8)
Other	-(*)	-(*)	-(*)	-(1)
Don't know	10(12)	5(8)	14(14)	11(13)

(last week's figures in brackets)

The Decision to Hold an Election

There is little criticism of Mrs Thatcher's decision to call an election on June 9th. There is no sign of any 'backlash' effect. 66% believe she was right to call the Election, 16% wrong and 18% did not take a view. These figures do not vary between demographic or geographic groups.



Election Debating Propositions

"The current level of unemployment is largely due to the present Conservative Government's policies."

Although the Government is still vulnerable to this argument, the balance of opinion has shifted slightly in the Government's favour over the last week.

(last week's figures in brackets)

	VOTING INTENTION			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	Voters			
	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	22(23)	5(4)	45(45)	25(27)
Agree	24(28)	12(17)	33(38)	37(36)
Neither agree nor disagree	10(7)	11(8)	7(5)	11(9)
Disagree	28(25)	45(40)	10(9)	19(20)
Disagree strongly	13(15)	25(29)	2(2)	6(5)
Don't know	3(2)	2(2)	2(1)	2(3)

"Labour's policies on nuclear disarmament are likely to win more support than Conservative policies."

Only 30% of voters now accept this proposition compared with 37% last week, 70% of Conservatives, 55% of Alliance voters and 30% of Labour voters now disagree with the proposition.

	VOTING INTENTION			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	Voters			
	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	8(7)	4(3)	17(14)	4(4)
Agree	22(30)	14(17)	34(47)	22(26)
Neither agree nor disagree	8(9)	6(9)	8(9)	11(9)
Disagree	39(33)	49(42)	25(19)	45(45)
Disagree strongly	14(12)	21(22)	5(3)	10(13)
Don't know	9(9)	6(8)	11(9)	8(3)

(last week's figures in brackets)

"The policies of the Conservative Government since they were elected have severely damaged the National Health Service."

More people accept this proposition (46%) than disagree with it (38%) although again, the balance of opinion has shifted slightly in the Government's favour over the last week.

(last week's figures in brackets)

	VOTING INTENTION			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	Voters			
	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	20(21)	5(5)	41(40)	23(23)
Agree	26(31)	15(20)	36(39)	36(41)
Neither agree nor disagree	8(9)	10(13)	6(5)	8(6)
Disagree	31(23)	50(41)	12(6)	22(17)
Disagree strongly	7(6)	12(11)	1(1)	4(2)
Don't know	7(10)	7(11)	4(9)	6(11)

"The policies of the Conservative Government since they were elected have severely damaged the education service provided for most children."

Response to this proposition is almost identical to the response to the health service proposition - rather more voters (46%) agree with it than disagree (38%), but while the Government is still vulnerable the position has improved slightly over the last week.

(last week's figures in brackets)

	VOTING INTENTION			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	Voters			
	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	19(21)	5(3)	38(41)	23(26)
Agree	27(32)	16(21)	37(40)	33(43)
Neither agree nor disagree	7(8)	8(12)	6(5)	9(7)
Disagree	30(24)	48(43)	10(7)	22(16)
Disagree strongly	8(7)	14(14)	1(2)	3(2)
Don't know	9(6)	9(8)	8(4)	9(5)

Effectiveness of Parties at Dealing with Problems

A clear majority of voters believe that the Conservatives would be best at dealing with Defence - Controlling Trade Unions - Dealing with the Common Market - Law and Order and Rising Prices. Only on unemployment is it thought by more voters that Labour would be the more effective (39%) than think the Conservatives would be more effective (29%).

This is a less clear advantage for Labour than has been shown on some polls which ask "which parties have the best policies for dealing with unemployment". It may well be that talk of Conservatives "dealing effectively" with the unemployment problem is more credible than talk of Conservatives "having the most relevant policies for unemployment".

On the remaining issues, about one Labour voter in four and one Alliance voter in three believes that the Conservatives would be best at dealing with them.

Base: All voters (2092)		<u>Party thought to be best at dealing with</u>			
<u>Best at dealing with</u>		<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>	<u>Other/Don't know</u>
Unemployment	%	29	39	10	22
Rising prices	%	47	26	8	19
Law and Order	%	52	19	7	22
Controlling Trade Unions	%	54	30	5	12
Dealing with the Common Market	%	54	23	7	16
Defence of the Country	%	60	18	5	17

Trust in Election Campaign Promises

Overall more voters believe that Conservatives are likely to do what they promise (48%) than believe Labour (37%) or the Alliance (39%) will do so. Two thirds of Conservative and Alliance voters and a quarter of their own supporters do not believe that Labour will do what they promise. A quarter of voters have not formed a view about what the Alliance are likely to do.

Q. Irrespective of which way you will vote, do you think that the .(name.of.party). will or will not do what they promised during the Election if they win.

		VOTING INTENTION			
		<u>All</u> Voters	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
		%	%	%	%
<u>Conservatives</u>	will	48	77	20	28
	will not	44	15	73	60
	Don't know	9	8	7	12
<u>Labour</u>	will	37	26	63	26
	will not	52	64	27	64
	Don't know	11	10	10	10
<u>Alliance</u>	will	39	38	33	63
	will not	38	38	41	24
	Don't know	24	24	26	13

The Conservative Record

The electorate is absolutely evenly divided in their belief as to whether the present Conservative Government has (47%) or has not (46%) kept the promises it made in 1979, while 8% don't know. Criticism of the Government is particularly strong amongst Labour voters (78%), amongst the DE social class (56%), amongst Council tenants (57%), trade unionists (56%) and in the North West (54%).

The Alliance

There is still potential for an Alliance 'bandwagon'. Voters are more likely to support the Alliance if they thought the Alliance would get a majority or hold the balance of power, figures have not changed significantly since last week.

While this still applies to a significant minority of Conservative voters, it applies slightly more so to Labour. Similarly a significant proportion (23%) of Alliance supporters would be less likely to vote for them if they thought only a few seats were winnable, by comparison with 27% last week.

Likelihood of voting for Alliance if:	VOTING INTENTION		
	<u>Conservative</u> %	<u>Labour</u> %	<u>Alliance</u> %
they would get a majority	20(18)	31(28)	87(85)
they were likely to hold the balance of power	17(17)	30(25)	86(88)
they would only win a few seats	5(5)	9(10)	71(65)

There is a general inclination to think that the Labour Party would be harmed rather more than the Conservatives if the Alliance "did well".

	<u>All Voters</u>
Party most harmed if Alliance do well.	
Labour	42 (43)
Conservative	36 (33)
Both equally	10 (10)
Other	1 (1)
Don't know	11(13)

(note last week's figures in brackets)

Many more voters reject (47%) than accept (29%) the proposition that "There is very little difference between the policies of the Liberal/SDP Alliance and those of the Labour Party."

43% of Conservatives disagree as do 50% of Labour and 68% of Alliance voters.

	VOTING INTENTION			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	Voters			
	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	3	3	3	3
Agree	26	31	23	17
Neither agree nor disagree	8	9	8	4
Disagree	37	36	39	47
Disagree strongly	10	7	11	21
Don't know	15	14	15	8

The Labour Party

There is a considerable level of credibility in the view that "The policies of the Labour Party are so left wing that if they were elected they would damage our traditional way of life in Britain.

	VOTING INTENTION			
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	Voters			
	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	24	41	4	20
Agree	28	36	13	35
Neither agree nor disagree	6	4	6	9
Disagree	25	12	42	25
Disagree strongly	11	2	28	6
Don't know	6	5	6	5

General Election 1983 - Public Opinion Review 11. Introduction

Since the election was announced on Monday 9th May four published polls have shown the results of a voting intention question. In addition the Party's first 'State of Battle' survey (conducted 13/14 May) included a voting intention question. Details of the results of these voting intention questions are shown below. The table also includes the results of the Gallup survey published in the Daily Telegraph on 12th May which was conducted before the election was announced and the two surveys, conducted by ORC and Gallup for the Conservative Party on 6/7 May 1983.

<u>Fieldwork Dates</u>	<u>Poll and Publication</u>	<u>Voting Intention</u> (Excluding don't knows)					
		<u>Sample Size</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Oth</u>	<u>Con Lead</u>
4-9 May	Gallup (D. Tel)	971	49	31½	17½	2	17½
6-7 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2307	44	34	20	2	10
6-7 May	Gallup (PRIVATE POLL)	2103	46	31	20	2	15
6-7 May	NOP (Mail on Sunday)	990	47	34	18	1	13
10 May	MORI (D. Star)	1047	46	31	21	2	15
9-11 May	Marplan (Guardian)	1457	46	34	19	1	12
11 May	Harris (TV Eye)	1048	52	31	17	0	21
12 May	MORI (D. Express)	964	49	34	15	2	15
13/14 May	ORC (PRIVATE POLL)	2092	48	34	16	2	14
GENERAL ELECTION 1979 (UK) -			43.9	36.9	13.8	5.4	7

Support for the Conservative Party in polls conducted since the announcement of the election has varied from 46% to 52%, Labour support has varied from 31% to 34% and Alliance support from 15% to 21%. There is no clear trend (either upwards or downwards) in terms of support for any of the parties.

Our weekend surveys (6/7 May and 13/14 May) interviewed a large enough sample across Great Britain to permit us to look at voting behaviour in each major region. Details are shown below:-

Voting Intention - Regions 13/14 May  
(figures in brackets are comparative data for 6/7 May)

<u>England</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
North (%)	32 (27)	44 (50)	14 (10)	2 (2)	8 (12)
Yorks & Humberside (%)	44 (45)	39 (29)	12 (22)	1 (-)	5 (4)
East Midlands (%)	48 (39)	28 (41)	18 (15)	- (-)	6 (5)
East Anglia (%)	51 (53)	26 (17)	12 (22)	1 (-)	10 (8)
South East (%)	53 (53)	19 (21)	18 (20)	1 (-)	9 (6)
GLC (%)	42 (41)	34 (37)	13 (15)	1 (1)	10 (6)
South West (%)	43 (49)	17 (23)	25 (24)	- (-)	15 (4)
West Midlands (%)	47 (44)	31 (30)	12 (21)	1 (-)	9 (5)
North West (%)	36 (37)	42 (40)	11 (18)	- (-)	10 (6)
Scotland (%)	42 (26)	33 (38)	12 (20)	6 (11)	7 (5)
Wales (%)	38 (40)	33 (32)	19 (18)	3 (7)	8 (3)
Great Britain (%)	44 (42)	31 (32)	15 (19)	2 (1)	9 (5)

In line with the overall national increase in Conservative support Conservative support in the regions also tended to show an increase - the sharp jump in support in the Northern area, the North-West and Scotland is particularly worth noting.

In addition to these national studies we have had in the first week of the campaign two surveys published in Scotland both conducted before the election announcement. Details of the findings are shown below:-

Voting Intention Scotland

	<u>Glasgow Herald</u> System Three (Published 13th May - conducted April 21-3 May)	<u>Scotsman</u> MORI (Published 11th May - conducted 3-5 May)
	%	%
Conservative	24	32
Labour	49	35
Lib/SDP	15	23
SNP	11	9
Others	1	-

The significant differences between these polls can partly be accounted for by the differing fieldwork dates and the long period System Three took to conduct their study. These findings can be contrasted with the results from our private studies which found during the week of the Scottish Conservative Conference our support increasing from 26% (6/7 May) to 42% (13/14 May).

2. Harris Survey - TV Eye 12th May 1983

In addition to the standard voting intention question the Harris study conducted for TV Eye (fieldwork 11th May) included a range of other election related questions.

Having asked 'Which of these issues do you think should be the most important in the election campaign?' They found:-

	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u> <u>Supporters</u>	<u>Labour</u> <u>Supporters</u>	<u>Alliance</u> <u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	61	48	77	70
Inflation/rising prices	11	16	5	8
The Common Market	2	2	4	2
Nuclear Disarmament	8	7	21	6
Reform of Rates	3	3	1	3
Law and Order	8	11	2	8
Control of Trade Unions	8	14	-	3

Unemployment remains the key issue for electors - although Conservative supporters tend to regard it as being less important than Labour or Alliance supporters.

Harris asked respondents 'Some people believe that Britain should give up all nuclear weapons whatever other countries do. Other people believe that Britain should keep nuclear weapons as long as the Russians have them. Which do you agree with?' - only 21% of the electorate selected the unilateral option, 72% the multi-lateral approach and 6% did not have a view. Among Conservative supporters only 9% favoured a unilateral



approach, among Labour supporters 39% and among Alliance supporters 23%.

When asked about the Common Market in terms of 'Would you prefer to see Britain staying in the Common Market or coming out of it' they found 54% in favour of staying in, 36% for coming out and 9% not having a view. A majority of Labour supporters favoured leaving. Details are shown below:-

<u>Common Market - Stay or Leave</u>				
	<u>All</u>	<u>Con.</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	%	%	%
Staying in	54	69	34	61
Coming out	36	23	57	32
Don't Know	9	8	9	7.

When Harris asked 'Would you prefer to see more industries like banks and building societies nationalised or would you prefer to see more nationalised industries like British Airways sold off to the private sector?', only 22% wanted more industries to be nationalised, 54% some nationalised industries to be sold off and 24% wanted neither approach or did not have a view.

On the question of jobs and government spending they asked 'Would you prefer to see more jobs created by government spending even if this meant the cost of living going up or do you believe that high unemployment is the continuing price to be paid for keeping down prices?' 61% wanted more jobs to be created by spending, 27% believed high unemployment is acceptable to control inflation and 12% did not have a view. Details are shown below:-

<u>Jobs Versus Inflation</u>				
	<u>All</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Alliance</u>
	%	%	%	%
More jobs by more government spending	61	47	80	67
Unemployment price to be paid to keep down inflation	27	40	13	19
Don't Know	12	13	7	14.

63% of respondents claimed to be in favour of more laws to curb the power of trade unions and only 22% thought that powers taken away from trade unions should be returned.

### 3. Marginal Seat Survey (Weekend World 15th May)

The Weekend World programme on 15th May included the results of a survey conducted in the marginal seats on 12/13 May. The study conducted by Harris (ORC) looked at the following types of marginal seats:-

- Seats threatened by Liberals (or already held by them)
- Seats on the Alliance 'hit' list (both Conservative and Labour)
- Conservative/Labour marginals.

Details of the main findings are shown overleaf:-

(a) Conservative/Labour Marginals

	<u>Voting Intention</u>		
	<u>All</u> %	<u>Con Held</u> <u>Marginals</u> %	<u>Lab Held</u> <u>Marginals</u> %
Conservatives	45	43	46
Labour	39	40	38
Alliance	15	16	14
Other	1	1	2
Con Lead	6	3	8
1979 Projections	0.1	(CON 2.2)	(LAB 2.0)

We have a small lead in Conservative held marginal seats and a slightly larger lead in Labour held marginal seats. The seats included in the study had been selected on the basis of the ITN/BBC study which produced a 'ghost' House of Commons on the new boundaries from 1979.

(b) SDP 'Hit List' Seats

	<u>Voting Intention</u>		
	<u>All</u> %	<u>Con Held</u> <u>Seats</u> %	<u>Lab Held</u> <u>Seats</u> %
Conservative	43	48	36
Labour	38	35	44
Alliance	16	14	18
Others	3	3	2.

In those seats included on the Alliance 'hit' list they do not seem to be making much impact either against Conservatives or Labour.

(c) Liberal Threat Seats

	<u>Voting Intention</u>		
	<u>All</u> %	<u>In Liberal</u> <u>Held Seats</u> %	<u>In Conservative Held Seats</u> <u>(threatened by Liberals)</u> %
Conservatives	44	44	48
Labour	23	19	18
Alliance/Liberal	30	33	32
Others	3	4	2

Alliance support (ie Liberal) is holding up when in seats they currently hold - although we have a 11% lead and they remain in second place to us in Conservative held seats in which they threaten us - although 16 percentage points behind us.